



Rwanda

RAPID ASSESSTMENT

Support to smallholder farmers to mitigate COVID-19 related shocks by improving their food security, resilience and livelihood status

IFAD'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

RURAL POOR STIMULUS FACILITY (RPSF)

FACILITY'S PILLARS



Inputs
& basic assets



Targeted
funds



Access
to markets



Digital
services

RPSF project: Support to smallholder farmers to mitigate COVID-19 related shocks by improving their food security, resilience and livelihood status (Rwanda)¹

Launched in April 2020, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) is IFAD's multi-donor response to COVID-19. With the overall objective of providing agile support to poor rural producers affected by key immediate challenges posed due to COVID-19, it seeks to improve the resilience of rural livelihoods in the context of the crisis by ensuring timely access to inputs, information, markets and liquidity. The support to smallholder farmers to mitigate COVID-19 related shocks by improving their food security, resilience and livelihood status in the Context of COVID-19 in Rwanda is part of the 20% of the projects chosen to undergo a rapid assessment to report against Tier 1 'development result' indicators in the RPSF Results Measurement Framework.

Project activities

The project was implemented through the Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) of the Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), which is the implementing agency of the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI). With RPSF financing of US\$ 1.4 million, the project contributed to food security of poor vulnerable farmers affected by COVID-19 pandemic in Rwanda.

Specifically, the project acquired and distributed hybrid maize seed, certified beans seed, vegetables seeds, Irish potato and certified sweet potato vines. Farmers also received DAP fertilizers, Urea and NPK. The distribution of inputs was accompanied by provision of farmer advisory services using farmer promoters (volunteer community leaders who provide farmer-to-farmer extension). The project also contributed to increasing by 2.500MT the storage capacity of the existing Warehouse for the National Strategic Grain Reserve (NSGR) in Kicukiro. In addition to the other inputs provided, the project also procured and distributed 250,000 kg of maize and 150,000 kg of beans which helped to feed farmers in need of food assistance during the lockdown initiated by the government to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The project intervention zones were 16 Districts across the Eastern Province (Bugesera, Gatsibo, Kayonza, Kirehe, Ngoma and Nyagatare; Southern Province (Nyanza, Ruhango, Gisagara, Huye, Nyaruguru and Nyamagabe), Northern Province (Rulindo) and Western Province (Rubavu, Ngororero and Rusizi). In addition to facing the impacts of the pandemic, target districts were selected based on the level of drought, poverty, and food insecurity. Approximately 48,000 people were directly supported, more than half of them women, therefore reaching more than 210,000 household members. Rapid assessment methodology.

Rapid assessment methodology

¹ This note is prepared by Vibhuti Mendiratta, Gonzalo Nunez-Chaim and Piero Massotti from the Research and Impact Assessment (RIA) division of IFAD.

Self-reported information on Tier I ‘development results’ indicators was collected from a representative sample of 452 beneficiary households supported by the first component (inputs and basic assets), of which 50 percent are headed by women and 18 percent are headed by youth (aged less than 35 years). Details of each indicator were asked with the aim of capturing the potential contribution effect from i) COVID-19 and ii) the RPSF project. Interviews were conducted between the last week of April 2022 and mid-May 2022 using a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) survey.

Key results ²

Contribution effect of COVID-19

- Nearly eight out of ten beneficiary households experienced a sharp decline in production, market sales, income and number of meals consumed due to COVID-19, prior to the start of project activities. Households were less often affected on the number of assets owned and their resilience to other shocks.
- Women headed beneficiary households were more affected by the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of meals consumed, compared to households headed by men. Youth headed beneficiary households also more affected compared to households headed by adults in terms of income.

Contribution effect of RPSF

- Most households were able to maintain or improve on all the indicators of interest.
- Compared to beneficiary households headed by men, those headed by women were not only more affected by the pandemic in terms of food security, but also less likely to maintain or improve the number of meals consumed after the program was introduced.
- Moreover, a smaller share of beneficiary households headed by youth, compared to adults, reported having maintained or improved the number of assets owned. This suggests it is harder for youth-headed households to recover even with project support.

Lessons learned

- Based on the findings, future programs should consider mechanisms for i) supporting asset accumulation of youth-headed households; and ii) improving food security of women-headed households.

² The rapid assessment does not consider a control group; thus, results are only indicative of potential contribution effects.

Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF

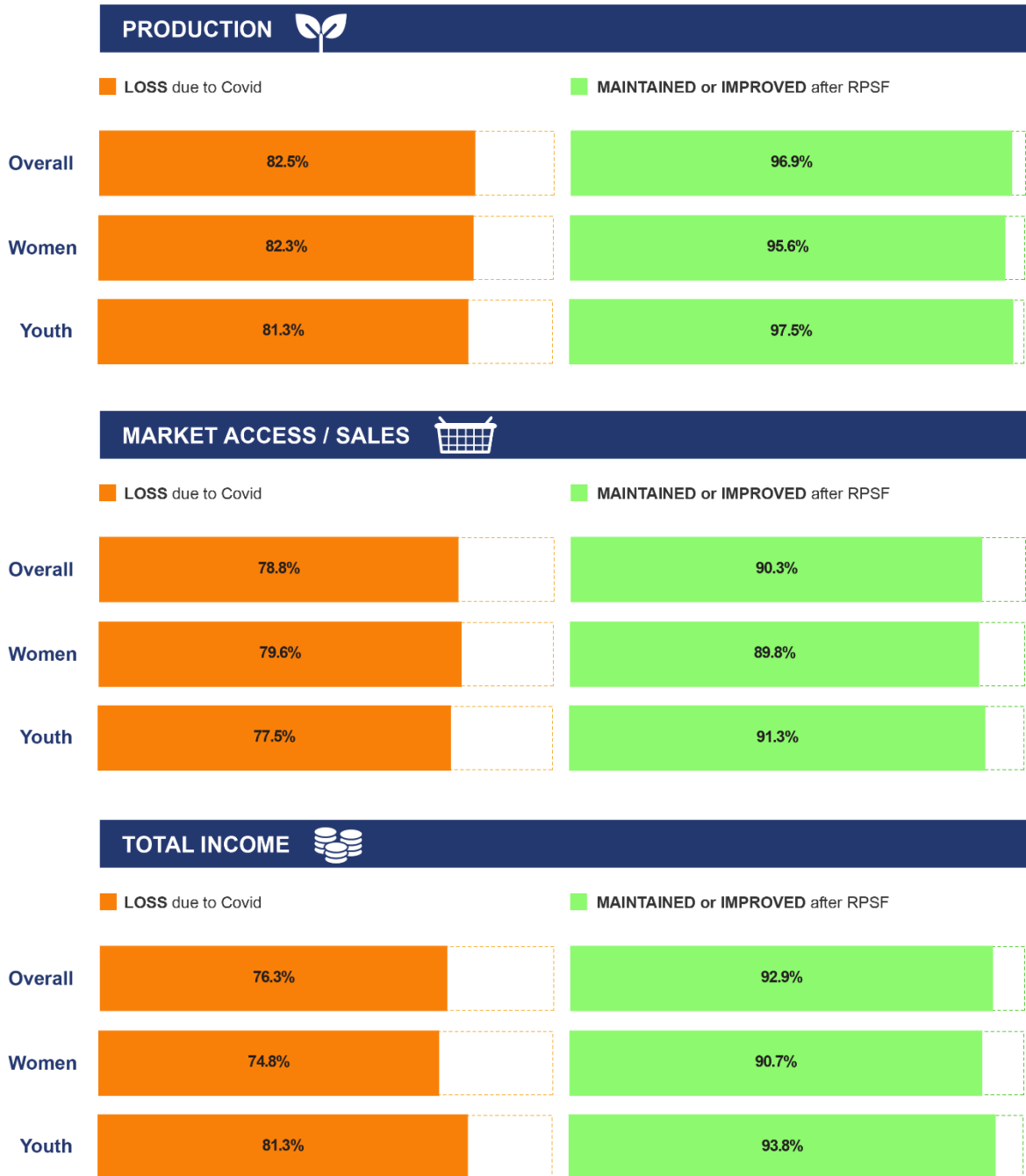
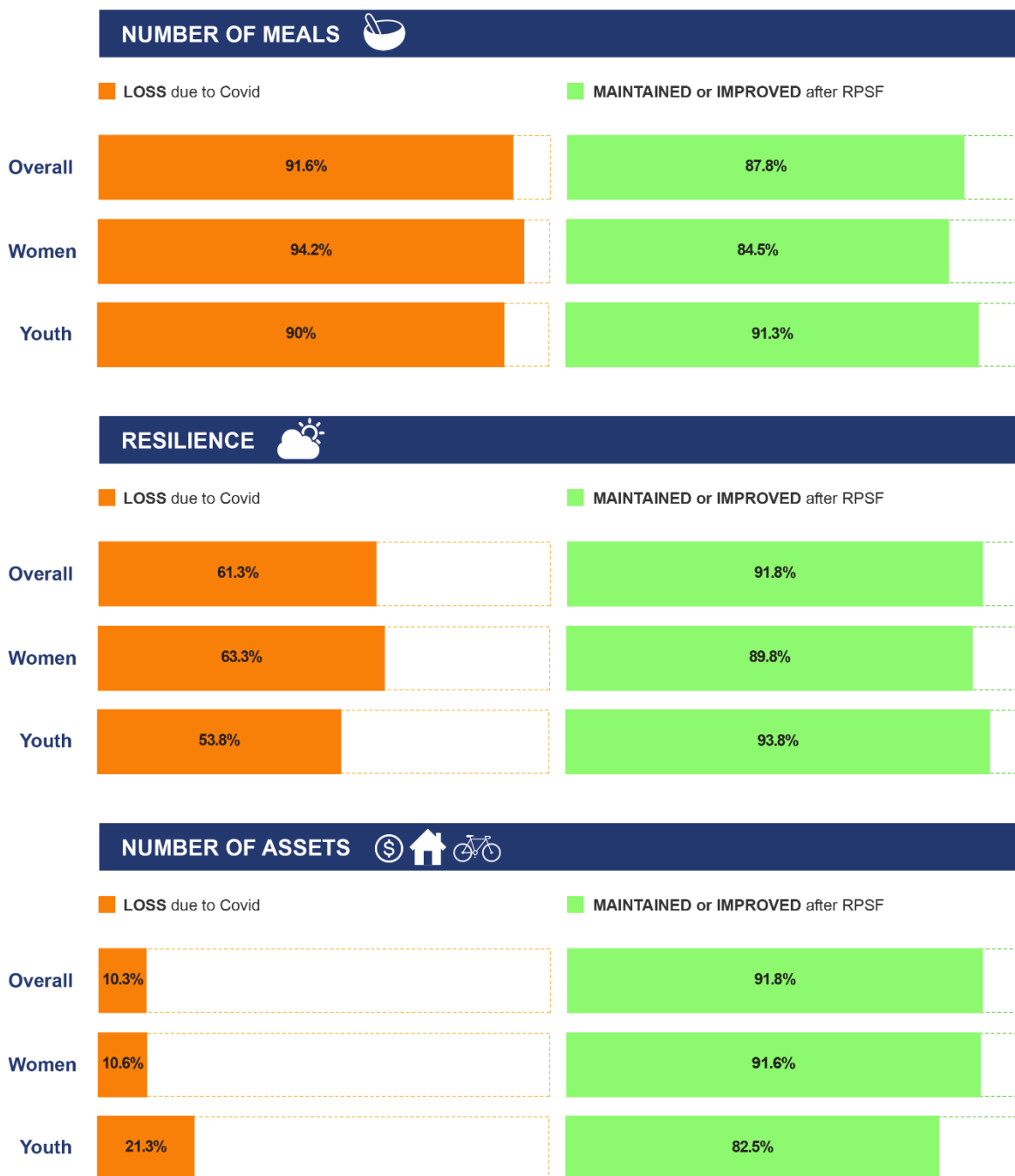


Figure 1: Percentage of households that experienced a loss in each Tier I indicator due to COVID

Figure 2: Percentage of households that were able to maintain or improve each Tier I indicator after RPSF



NOTE: RPSF activities were rolled out starting in March 2021.

Two separate questions were asked for each indicator. The first question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator between March 2020 and March 2021: i) a total loss; ii) reduced; iii) stayed the same; or iv) increased. The **orange bar** shows the percentage of households that responded i) or ii) to this question, that is, those which experienced a total loss or reduction in the indicator. The second question asked what happened to each Tier 1 indicator since March 2021: i) reduced further; ii) stayed the same; iii) increased but still below the level before COVID-19; iv) returned to level before COVID-19; or v) increased above the level before COVID-19. The **green bar** shows the percentage of households that responded ii), iii) iv) or v) to this question, that is, those which maintained or improved each indicator relative to pre-RPSF levels.

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